

Home Office and IBM to partner on Emergency Services Network

- IBM selected as supplier for major new network to connect emergency services communications
- The Emergency Service Network will coordinate efforts and responses from frontline staff, making our streets safer and delivering on the government's Plan for Change
- 300,000 personnel will benefit from data, imagery, location reports and public safety information



London, 15 January, 2025 – Frontline emergency services will benefit from a new communications network that will modernise how they work together, as the government announces a new partnership with IBM following a series of delays by previous suppliers.

The Emergency Services Network (ESN) will support more than 300,000 emergency responders in Great Britain, providing them with better technology and faster access to data in emergency situations and frontline operations. Police forces, fire services and ambulance trusts will be able to share live data and imagery, location reports and essential public safety information as they work on time-critical rescue and response efforts.

After several delays to the rollout of ESN over recent years, the government is committing to delivering the project as quickly as possible and help save lives as a result. The Policing Minister, Dame Diana Johnson, will chair regular meetings to ensure the project is running to time and cost.

Providing the emergency services with improved technology is a key part of the government's drive to make the nation's streets safer, which is a crucial part of the Prime Minister's Plan for Change.

Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention, Dame Diana Johnson, said:

"Every day our brave emergency services help members of the public facing life-or-death situations. We must do everything we can to maximise the chances of successful outcomes, and communications between frontline staff is critical to ensuring this.

"This government is working tirelessly to support this project, making sure it is delivered in a timely and cost-effective manner, and IBM will be an important part of bringing the Emergency Services Network online."

Rahul Kalia, Managing Partner at IBM UK and Ireland, said:

"We are proud to support the Emergency Services Network (ESN) in delivering a secure and resilient communications platform to empower frontline emergency services.

"Working with our ecosystem partners, we will deliver mission-critical services for first responders to enhance safety in our communities across Great Britain.

"We look forward to working with the Government to deliver this in a timely and cost-effective manner."

Software for new handheld devices will provide data-sharing functions and real-time video features, providing personnel with the critical information they need to save lives, as well as a push-to-talk protocol for instant communications.

One real-world example of how the network could work is a serious road traffic collision:

- The first service to arrive would be able to share their exact location using GPS data with the other services.
- Fire services would be instantly updated with the make and model of vehicle, which can then be cross-referenced with data on how to best use cutting equipment, if someone was trapped, or where batteries are located on electric cars.
- They could also update paramedics with passenger details to check medical information and determine if there is anything they need to know such as prior medical conditions.
- This would greatly speed up dealing with the incident and the ability to aid the victims involved.

Led by the Home Office, ESN will implement the next generation of fast, safe, and secure voice, video, and data communication, allowing emergency services to work in tandem and coordinate efforts when protecting and aiding members of the public. Similar technology has already been rolled out with success in countries including the USA, Canada and South Korea.

As the new User Services supplier, IBM will be responsible for leading the design, build and system integration of the ESN platform. Key to achieving this will be IBM's delivery of IT infrastructure, which will be fundamental to ensuring improved and more efficient communication capabilities for Mission Critical Services. IBM will be delivering together with an ecosystem of partners including: Samsung Electronics, Ericsson, Frequentis, Exponential-E and Palo Alto Networks.

The news comes swiftly after EE was awarded the contract to provide the mobile communications infrastructure for the project, as the new government works towards deploying ESN and shutting down the current system, Airwave.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Please refer to our ThinkPage for further information and video from the Home Office and partners:

<https://www.ibm.com/new/announcements/ibm-delivers-user-services-for-the-emergency-services-network>

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